

VZCZCXRO9102  
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMA RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHAE #0445 3651338  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 311338Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0655  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS ASMARA 000445

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF FRONT OFFICE  
AF/RSA FOR LOUIS MAZEL, LAURA GRIESMER, LEARNED DEES  
DEPT FOR AF/E AND DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: ERITREA: HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS REGARDING SEXUAL  
ORIENTATION

REF: STATE 137065

[¶1](#). (SBU) In response to reftel A, homosexual conduct is criminalized under Article 600 of the Penal Code of 1957, inherited from Ethiopia, as an "unnatural carnal offence." Homosexual conduct is punishable by "simple imprisonment," which is reserved for lesser offences. In cases involving adults and minors, the minor is exempt from punishment if the adult is considered at fault. According to a high courts judge, Eritrea continues to prosecute individuals under Article 600 of the Penal Code.

[¶2](#). (SBU) Eritrea is a conservative society that considers homosexual behavior a moral crime. Homosexuality is often met with ridicule and persecution. Because sexual orientation is not openly discussed, the size of the homosexual population in Eritrea remains unknown.  
McMullen